

Writing Spell

Draft Due: Wednesday, November 19th

Final Due: Tuesday, December 2nd

Purpose:

1. For you to take ownership over one aspect of creative writing
2. For you to engage creatively with your own writing process
3. To demonstrate and share your collective knowledge about writing

What:

- A short piece of text: a poem, song, short, short story, letter, recipe, or something else...
- Instructs, commands, warns, or advises the reader how to practice magic through writing
- Visual presentation (e.g. design, layout, font) of spell enhances meaning of the text
- Incorporates examples from your own and someone else's writing
- Is understandable to speakers of contemporary English

Where do I start?

Start with your toolbox; start with your own writing; start with the writers you respect and enjoy. Base your spell on one piece of knowledge about writing that you absolutely believe is true. Your spell should also have some real magical power. By practicing your spell, people should be able to take possession of imaginations, transport minds to alternate realms, activate senses, cause people to laugh, to cry, to throw things (hopefully not in frustration with the writing). Challenge yourself to come up with the most powerful spell you can imagine.

Rubric (40 Summative Points)

I'll evaluate spells based on the following rubric...

Significance – (10 points)

Do you know what you're talking about? Is your spell substantial? For example, spells about grammar and punctuation are possible but need to be especially creative to get a good grade. Also, some principles of writing are subtle; they apply in some situations and not others. Good spells will take these exceptions into account.

Quality of examples – (10 points)

Do your examples illustrate your point? Do they provide a good model for people who want to learn how to practice your spell?

Creativity – (20 points)

Have you found a creative way to adapt the "spell format" to get across your message? This will include both your use of words (e.g. the quality of description, the rhythm of the lines) and images (layout of the page, color, font, pictures, etc.) Words and images will be worth ten points each.

Sample Spells

Use the examples below to get ideas for what your spell could be. These weren't as obscure to people who lived in these societies and yours shouldn't be obscure to people who live in ours.

Narrative Poem Form

Phol and Wodan were riding to the woods,
and the foot of Balder's foal was sprained
So Sinthgunt, Sunna's sister, conjured it.
and Frija, Volla's sister, conjured it.
and Wodan conjured it, as well he could:
Like bone-sprain, so blood-sprain,
so joint-sprain:
Bone to bone, blood to blood,
joints to joints, so may they be mended.

~ *Merserberg Charm for healing a broken leg of a horse (Ancient Europe)*

Command Form

O my heart of my mother! O my heart of my mother! O my heart of my different forms! Do not stand up as a witness against me, do not be opposed to me in the tribunal, do not be hostile to me in the presence of the Keeper of the Balance, for you are my ka which was in my body, the protector who made my members hale. Go forth to the happy place whereto we speed, do not make my name stink to the Entourage who make men. Do not tell lies about me in the present of the god. It is indeed well that you should hear!

~ *Book of the Dead, spell (Ancient Egypt)*

Healing or Recipe Form

I place the thy charm on thy body
And on thy prosperity
The charm of the God of Life
For thy protection
The charm that Bride of kine
Put round the fair neck of Dornghill
The charm that Mary put about her Son
Between sole and throat
Between pap and knee
Between back and breast

~ *Charm for a Lasting Life (Carmina Gadelica – Scottish Highlands)*

Hymn Form

To the divine Flame, the seer, him whose law of being is the Truth, the shining one, the destroyer of all evils, approach and chant the hymn of praise.

~ *Rgveda (Ancient India)*